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RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM 4284

C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 000386

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/29/2012  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [MASS](#) [MCAP](#) [JO](#)  
SUBJECT: BURST OF PROGRESS AHEAD OF DEMINING MEETING

REF: 06 AMMAN 1500

Classified By: Ambassador David Hale for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

#### Summary

1. (C) Jordan cleared in 2006 nearly one-half of its minefields. However, the GOJ is concerned about conventional and terrorist threats from Syria, and may delay plans to remove mines along its northern border. Jordan will host the 2007 Meeting of States Parties to the demining treaty, at which the GOJ plans to showcase Jordanian performance on demining and encourage more Middle Eastern governments to sign the treaty. Jordan also hopes to establish itself as a regional center of excellence in demining. End summary.

#### GOJ Proud of Progress

2. (SBU) During its 2006 fourth quarter review, the National Committee for Demining and Rehabilitation (NCDR) presented its accomplishments for 2006 and its goals for 2007 through 2009. In the past year, Jordan, through NCDR and the army's Royal Engineering Corps (REC), cleared nearly one-half of the remaining minefields in the country. All the mines removed were along the Israeli-Jordanian border, with the bulk of the work done by the REC. The NCDR also instituted a quality assurance program to ensure the safety of the deminers, and who are also responsible for certifying the cleared land for transition to civil use. NCDR has pushed demining work near Aqaba, in particular, to clear the way for a large real estate development.

3. (SBU) For 2007, NCDR hopes to complete all work on its border with Israel and to initiate work on the Syrian-Jordanian border. The northern border has 93 minefields with approximately 86,000 anti-personnel mines and 48,000 anti-tank mines in stand-alone or mixed fields. NCDR estimates it can clear these fields by 2009, if work begins by June. NCDR will also start its U.S.-funded Mine Risk Education program for affected communities in the North; delayed due to the departure of the program manager. NCDR Chairman Prince Mired bin Ra'ad stated that the organization has sufficient funding for 2007.

#### Concerns about Syria

4. (C) Despite Prince Mired's comments on funding, NCDR Director Mohammad Breikat (protect) told poloff that it is impossible for demining to begin on the Syrian border unless Jordan has watchtowers, a berm, and barbed wire to replace the mines. He estimates that the GoJ will require 10 million USD for these improvements on the Syrian border. Breikat continued that Jordan is likely to request assistance from

donors, including the U.S.

¶5. (C) Meanwhile, the terrain complicates NCDR's goal of demining the Israel-Jordan border by the end of this year, as it requires coordination with the Israeli Defense Force. Yasin Majali, Program Manager of Norwegian People's Aid, will travel to Tel Aviv in the next couple of weeks to establish a mechanism for Jordanian deminers to get access to minefields by crossing first into Israel. He will also request information on previous Israeli demining efforts to complete quality assurance. In exchange, Majali is offering to clear portions of Israel's no-mans land at no cost.

Let's Talk  
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¶6. (SBU) Much of the driving force behind Jordan's recent demining work is the upcoming Eighth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on their Destruction (known as the Ottawa Convention) to be held at the Dead Sea November 18-22, 2007. Jordan wants to use this gathering as a springboard for the treaty within the Middle East and to promote Jordan as a regional center of excellence for demining. Prince Mired has approached the USG with the concept of creating an educational/training center in Jordan; however, no donor has yet offered to fund his proposal.

Comment  
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¶7. (C) Jordan sees the U.S. as a partner in demining due to our assistance to both demining and border security. NCDR views U.S. assistance to border security, in particular, as the key to assuaging GoJ security concerns along the Syrian border. Despite NCDR's optimism, it is unlikely that Jordan will meet its Ottawa Convention obligations to remove all mines by 2009 as long as Syria remains a significant security concern.

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